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Human resources management

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Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

I. Introduction

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered a series of reports relating to human resources management. The documents reviewed and those used for background by the Advisory Committee are listed in annex I to the present report. During its consideration of the reports, the Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification. The Committee also met with representatives of the United Nations Staff Union in New York at their request.

2. A number of the reports under consideration reiterate or expand on proposals relating to human resources management that are already before the General Assembly and on which the Advisory Committee has already made recommendations (see A/62/7/Add.14). Where appropriate, therefore, the comments and recommendations set out in the present report should be read together with those set out in the Committee's previous report.

3. The Advisory Committee is aware that, in response to a request made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination (see A/61/16, para. 369), which was subsequently endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolutions 61/235 and 62/236, the Office of Internal Oversight Services has conducted an in-depth evaluation of the Office of Human Resources Management (see A/63/221).

II. Human resources management reform

General considerations

4. In his report on human resources management reform (A/63/282), the Secretary-General provided an overview of and update on the implementation of the reform programme set out in previous reports (A/57/387 and Corr.1, A/59/2005 and

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A/61/255). It focuses in particular on actions taken in response to the requests set out in General Assembly resolution 61/244 and outlines planned future directions. Some of the issues discussed in the overview report, such as contractual arrangements and harmonization of conditions of service, mobility and recruitment and staffing, are also presented by the Secretary-General in separate reports and dealt with by the Advisory Committee in sections III, IV and V below. Accordingly, in the present section, the Committee deals with the following issues:

- Human resources planning and monitoring
- Career development and support
- Strengthening of leadership and management capacity
- Performance management
- Human resources information technology
- Health-care services

Issues relating to accountability are discussed in the report of the Advisory Committee on that question (A/63/457). The human resources aspects of the system for the administration of justice will be dealt with by the Committee in a forthcoming report.

5. In his report on investing in people (A/61/255), the Secretary-General set out his new vision for human resources management. He underscored the need for a multi-skilled, versatile and mobile workforce and reiterated that the Organization would be known for its high standards of ethics, fairness, transparency and accountability and its culture of continuous learning, high performance, managerial excellence and respect for diversity. That vision is reaffirmed in paragraph 6 of the Secretary-General's current report (A/63/282). **The Advisory Committee wishes to emphasize the fundamental importance of human resources management reform in the context of efforts to strengthen the international civil service.**

6. The Advisory Committee notes the work done by the Task Force on Human Resources Management and the Task Force to Simplify and Streamline the Rules of Work Processes. As the Secretary-General indicated in paragraph 10 of his report, the recommendations of the two task forces have been consolidated into one set of recommendations covering nine areas, including workforce planning; the staff selection system and vacancy management; professional competitive examinations; managers' responsibilities and performance management; mobility; career development and training; the payment of staff entitlements; pension terms; and contracts and conditions of service. The recommendations have been approved for action by the Secretary-General and, upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that a number of the recommendations within the purview of the Secretary-General were currently under implementation. Others, according to the Secretary-General, require consultation with staff or such entities as the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) or the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF). **The Advisory Committee encourages the Secretary-General to expedite those consultations and to update the General Assembly on the work of the two task forces in his next report on human resources management.**

7. **The Advisory Committee is of the view that, in general, the report of the Secretary-General does not provide sufficient statistical data to substantiate the**

progress reported, nor does it include benchmarks against which progress can be measured. The report also does not provide an indication of either the financial implications of the proposed initiatives or clear timelines for their implementation. Furthermore, the Committee regrets that the report does not analyse the interrelationships between the various human resources reform proposals, nor does it convey a sense of the relative priority accorded to each proposal. In this regard, it recalls the comments and recommendations of the Board of Auditors (see A/63/5 (Vol. I), chap. II, paras. 242-248).

8. **The Advisory Committee emphasizes the importance of a phased approach to the implementation of reform measures in order to allow sufficient time for improvements to take effect before moving from one phase to the next, as well as the need to prioritize such measures. The Committee is also concerned about the tendency of the Office of Human Resources Management to embark upon new reform initiatives without first having evaluated the effects of those which have been implemented previously. The Committee recommends that the Secretary-General ensure that future reform proposals are accompanied by a comprehensive results and impact assessment of earlier reforms and existing arrangements, as well as a cost-benefit analysis of new initiatives.**

Human resources planning and monitoring

9. The Secretary-General indicated in paragraph 19 of his report that the overall aims in the area of human resources planning and monitoring are to implement a medium-term integrated workforce planning system and to develop supporting tools that facilitate meeting the Organization's human resources targets at the level of individual departments and offices and the Secretariat as a whole. In this connection, the Advisory Committee notes the acknowledgement by the Task Force on Human Resources Management that strategic workforce planning is a key priority for departments. The Committee also notes the planned introduction of systematic workforce planning. **The Committee is of the view, however, that in an international civil service this type of tool should have been in place, particularly given the challenges faced by the Organization as a result of the demographic transition in the Secretariat (see A/63/310, para. 79, and A/62/628/Add.1, para. 9). The Committee urges the Secretary-General to pursue efforts in this area as a matter of priority.**

10. According to the Secretary-General, departmental planning and performance in the area of human resources management are underpinned by the human resources action plan system and the senior managers' compacts with the Secretary-General (A/63/282, para. 21). The Secretary-General indicated that the compacts and action plans are important elements of the organizational accountability framework and that their implementation is monitored by the Department of Management and reviewed by the Management Performance Board (ibid., para. 22). The Advisory Committee notes the efforts made to increase accountability for planning and performance at the senior level, but also notes that, although departmental human resources planning exercises are currently in their fifth cycle, the report of the Secretary-General does not contain an analysis of the results achieved to date. Furthermore, there is no indication in the report of how compliance with the goals and targets set out in the action plans and compacts is measured, nor is there any information on measures to deal with the inability or failure to achieve those goals

and targets. **The Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to carry out such analyses and to report to the Assembly on the results.**

11. In paragraph 40 of his report, the Secretary-General indicated that the Office of Human Resources Management would continue to seek ways to strengthen its capacity for the practical implementation of the monitoring framework. In this connection, the Advisory Committee recalls that, in its resolution 57/305, the General Assembly endorsed the Secretary-General's approach to developing a more robust monitoring capacity in the Office. Upon request, the Committee was provided with generic terms of reference for the monitoring of human resources in offices and departments of the United Nations and in peacekeeping operations. **The Committee emphasizes the need to ensure effective monitoring and the provision of adequate guidance by the Office of Human Resources Management on the delegation of authority for human resources management, as well as clearly defined consequences for the failure to exercise such delegated authority in the proper manner. In the view of the Committee, the Secretary-General should have provided in his report more detailed information on the specific instruments envisaged to supplement the monitoring missions undertaken by the Office, as well as on the self-monitoring mechanism referred to in paragraph 39 of the report. The Secretary-General should also ensure attention to self-monitoring at the departmental level.**

12. **The Advisory Committee believes that robust and proactive monitoring is essential to ensure accountability at all levels. Accordingly, the Committee recommends that the Office of Human Resources Management continue to strengthen its monitoring of delegated authority for human resources management, including compliance with geographic and gender targets and the prompt filling of vacancies.**

Career development and support

13. In paragraphs 103 to 125 of his report, the Secretary-General set out his views on career development and support. He argued, in particular, that the implementation of career models, with potential career paths and specific development requirements, would strengthen the ability of the United Nations to recruit and retain talent, particularly since research has shown that young professionals increasingly look at possibilities for learning, growth and development when choosing an employer.

14. As indicated by the Secretary-General in paragraph 111 of his report, the current staff development policy includes both centrally organized programmes to build organizational capacity and support organizational reform and decentralized programmes whereby each year resources for the upgrading of specific substantive and technical skills are allocated directly to individual departments and offices on the basis of annual needs assessments. In paragraph 119 of the report, the Secretary-General noted that, over the past three bienniums, training funds have amounted to less than 1 per cent of staff costs, which falls short of the minimum level of 2 per cent endorsed by CEB. He went on to assert that a sizeable increase in resources for staff development and career support was needed.

15. **The Advisory Committee has in the past expressed its support for training as an important aspect of staff development and its belief that the United**

Nations should be an organization that nurtures talent, learning and professional development on the part of its staff (see A/61/537, para. 44). However, the Committee is of the opinion that clearer linkages should be made between training programmes and career paths, and that a more integrated, strategic and results-based approach to training, encompassing both Headquarters and the field, is needed, starting with the implementation of a selected number of the multiple priority issues listed in paragraph 125 of the report of the Secretary-General, including, in particular, the development of an inventory of critical skills. In this regard, the Committee recalls General Assembly resolution 61/244, in which the Assembly emphasized the importance of defining the target and strategy of training and career development.

16. **The Advisory Committee recalls the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly pertaining to the working and official languages of the United Nations and stresses the importance of compliance with the relevant legislative mandates.**

17. **As regards the ongoing process of harmonizing language programmes, referred to by the Secretary-General in paragraph 125 (j) of his report, the Advisory Committee is of the view that the Secretary-General should ensure that a consistent approach is taken to language courses in all duty stations, including those where the local language is not one of the official languages of the United Nations. Staff serving in such duty stations whose work requires knowledge of the local language or languages should have access to appropriate courses.**

18. **Taking into account the foregoing observations, the Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to develop a comprehensive training strategy applicable to staff serving both at Headquarters and in the field and based on sound workforce planning techniques and organizational needs. At the implementation stage, he should ensure that training programmes are planned and managed in a transparent manner and that staff are adequately informed of the availability of the programmes. The impact of such programmes on enhancing staff members' ability to discharge their duties should subsequently be evaluated and the efficiency and effectiveness with which such programmes are conducted should be reviewed.**

Strengthening leadership and management capacity

19. The Secretary-General indicated in paragraphs 128 to 133 of his report that the Organization's approach to managerial and leadership development includes targeted programmes for Professional staff at all levels and a variety of tools to enhance capacity. In future, the Secretary-General envisages reviewing and enhancing existing programmes and, subject to the availability of the necessary resources, significantly extending their provision to cover peacekeeping and field operations.

20. According to the Secretary-General, in late 2007, as part of its commitment to the systematic strengthening of leadership throughout the United Nations system, the Secretariat participated in the pilot of the inter-agency senior management network leadership development programme, which is a key component of the proposals for the establishment of the Senior Management Network. The

programme, which is based on a set of core competencies developed for the Senior Management Network, is intended to build managerial and leadership capacity across the system; foster shared standards and approaches as well as a common managerial culture across the system; contribute to a more professional management function throughout the system; and promote inter-agency coordination and mobility (see A/63/282, para. 133). As requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 61/239, section II.C, the International Civil Service Commission, in its report for 2008, provided a progress report on the Senior Management Network (A/63/30, paras. 174-181). The Advisory Committee notes that the inter-agency senior management network leadership development programme is still a pilot project, which would need to be redesigned to focus on leading change within the United Nations system and on the six identified United Nations leadership competencies, and that the establishment of the proposed Senior Management Network remains subject to the approval of the Assembly, as well as to the provision of the necessary funds and resources by Member States.

21. **The Advisory Committee agrees that the Organization's capacity to effectively meet current and future challenges and successfully drive organizational change depends to a large extent on skilful leadership and management (see A/63/282, para. 126), particularly at the most senior levels. As such, the Committee is supportive of efforts to systematically build management and leadership capacity through the implementation of focused management-oriented training. In this connection, the Committee encourages the Secretary-General to continue to make use of relevant existing mechanisms.**

22. With regard to the Secretary-General's proposal on the identification and grooming of promising staff (ibid., para. 136), the Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that design and development work for a new programme to identify and groom future leaders was under way, including research into existing programmes (if available) within the United Nations system and in the private and public sectors and the preparation of a statement of work detailing the specific requirements for the programme. Once completed, the procurement process would be initiated with the Procurement Service. The selection procedure for the programme would be determined by a learning advisory board, in consultation with the Office of Human Resources Management. It is expected that the Board will be established in the first quarter of 2009. **The Committee recommends, however, that the Secretary-General take a prudent approach to the identification and grooming of promising staff. The Committee also emphasizes that any measures to identify, groom and promote future leaders should be transparent, non-discriminatory, merit-based and inclusive and must be implemented within the framework of the staff selection system. The Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to provide more detailed information on the proposed programme, including on its planned objectives and its relationship with relevant Assembly resolutions and the Staff Regulations and Rules.**

Performance management

23. The Secretary-General stated, in paragraph 140 of his report, that the performance appraisal system (PAS), a key management tool for the Organization, was in place to align the work of all staff members with the goals of the United Nations and to allow managers to monitor the performance of each member of their

team. The system was first introduced in April 1996, and the current electronic version (e-PAS) became mandatory as from April 2003. One of the primary objectives of the system is to provide a fair, equitable, transparent and measurable system of performance management for all staff members throughout the Secretariat in support of a results-based culture that recognizes and rewards excellent performance and adequately addresses underperformance. However, according to the Secretary-General, a recent review of the current e-PAS system revealed shortcomings, including ongoing difficulties with the rating system; difficulties in accessing the e-PAS electronic tool; the need for adequate, additional mandatory training for staff and management in order to ensure better application of the system; and the need to hold managers and staff accountable for e-PAS compliance. The Advisory Committee notes that an intersessional working group on performance management was established by the Staff-Management Coordination Committee and is currently working on a comprehensive proposal for a new system. In the meantime, the Office of Human Resources Management has indicated that it is taking measures to improve the electronic tool, compliance and accountability by issuing a new administrative instruction.

24. The Advisory Committee has stressed the need for reform of the current performance appraisal system and has consistently emphasized the importance of developing links between the various monitoring and evaluation systems (see A/63/457, para. 19). The Committee notes with interest the initiatives described in paragraphs 153 to 161 of the report of the Secretary-General, which include clarifying and strengthening the role of the departmental management review committees to improve the consistency of staff assessments, ratings and overall compliance, the possible introduction of a "reverse appraisal" system to allow supervisees to provide feedback on the supervision received and mandatory management training for supervisors. **The Committee stresses that a credible, fair and fully functioning performance appraisal system is critical to effective human resources management policies and therefore welcomes the efforts of the Office of Human Resources Management to improve the system.**

25. The Advisory Committee notes the Secretary-General's intention to develop a system for recognizing of the contributions of staff during the biennium 2008-2009. **In this connection, the Committee recommends that the system include incentives such as accelerated promotion as a way to motivate and reward staff for excellent performance, as well as sanctions for underperformance.** The Committee commented on this question in paragraphs 57 to 60 of its first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007 (A/60/7).

26. The Advisory Committee notes the concerns regarding the credibility and effectiveness of the current performance appraisal system. According to table 2 of the report, in 2006/07, 90.7 per cent of staff were rated as fully meeting or frequently exceeding performance expectations and 8.7 per cent as consistently exceeding expectations. **The Advisory Committee stresses the need for appraisals to accurately capture the full range of performance, since this would enhance the usefulness of e-PAS as a tool for strengthening accountability.**

27. The e-PAS exercise, if properly carried out, should provide a full opportunity for two-way dialogue between staff members and their supervisors. **The Advisory Committee is of the view that the Office of Human Resources Management, in consultation with staff through the appropriate channels, should endeavour to**

rectify the shortcomings of the present arrangements. Further efforts should also be made to achieve the target of 100 per cent e-PAS compliance set out in the senior managers' compacts, as well as to map out and strengthen the links between performance and future career prospects.

Human resources information technology

28. In paragraphs 168 to 171 of his report, the Secretary-General describes three major information technology initiatives designed to streamline human resources operations. The first, an "e-staffing talent management support tool" (A/63/282, para. 168), which is intended to replace Galaxy, was approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 61/244. The Assembly allocated resources for 2007 to initiate the project, and the Office of Human Resources Management has now procured the necessary software and is planning to roll out the new system in phases during 2009. The second initiative is a learning management system, which would be developed as a central technical component of the United Nations Virtual Academy and would manage learning resources globally and provide access to them. The third project, approved by the Assembly in the same resolution, consists in developing a repository of electronically stored human resources information, which would serve as the official source of data for human resources. The repository is designed to facilitate reporting and analysis and will serve as a foundation for the business intelligence framework.

29. **The Advisory Committee expects that the Office of Human Resources Management, and the Department of Management in general, will continue to work closely with the Chief Information Technology Officer to ensure that the new information technology initiatives are appropriately aligned with the future enterprise resource planning system. It also expects that improved access to online courses will result in lower travel costs associated with training programmes. The Committee draws attention to the detailed comments on human resources information technology tools contained in its report on information and communications technology (A/63/487 and Corr.1) and recommends that the Secretary-General provide to the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session an analysis of gains in efficiency, transparency and accountability as a result of the introduction of the new systems.**

Health-care services

30. As indicated in paragraph 181 of the report of the Secretary-General, the Office of Human Resources Management provides a comprehensive occupational health service to United Nations staff system-wide, including health promotion, clinical care and travel health services, as well as advice to the administration of the United Nations and the funds and programmes, in particular the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support, on clinical and medico-administrative issues. In addition, it provides medical advice to United Nations medical staff and facilities system-wide, coordinates the implementation of policies on medical and health care and provides technical oversight services.

31. **Given the relevance of health-care services to all staff, regardless of their occupation or location, the Advisory Committee attaches great importance to this issue. It therefore welcomes the intention of the Office of Human Resources Management to realign its strategic emphasis in order to adopt a more modern,**

health promotion-based occupational health-care service, as well as the ongoing efforts to introduce a comprehensive electronic occupational health management system, including electronic medical records. The Committee also highlights the relationship between health-care services and staff morale and, by extension, performance, as well as the relevance of the Organization's health-care arrangements for staff mobility. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that a number of exemptions from the managed reassignment programme had been granted on medical grounds. It is possible that, if staff felt more confident about the provision of medical services in offices away from Headquarters, they would be more willing to accept assignments to those offices.

Staff-management relations

32. The Advisory Committee notes that, as indicated in paragraph 69 of the note by the Secretary-General containing the views of the staff representatives of the United Nations Secretariat (A/C.5/63/3/Add.2), the United Nations Staff Union in New York and the Staff Coordinating Council in Geneva have withdrawn from participation in the Staff-Management Coordination Committee. Upon request, the Committee was provided with the following information on the percentage of staff represented at the 2008 meeting of the Committee:

	Number	*Percentage of total*
Total staff, as at 30 June 2008	**39 503**	**100**
Staff represented	**13 635**	**34.52**
Vienna (United Nations Office at Vienna and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime)	1 045	
Santiago (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean)	654	
Addis Ababa (Economic Commission for Africa)	764	
Brindisi (Field Staff Union, field missions administered by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations)	6 608	
Nairobi (United Nations Office at Nairobi, United Nations Environment Programme and United Nations Human Settlements Programme)	1 919	
Bangkok (Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific)	569	
The Hague (International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia)	1 076	
Arusha (International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda)	1 000	
Staff not represented	**25 868**	**65.48**
Headquarters departments	6 718	
Local field staff represented by Staff Union in New York	15 218	
United Nations Office at Geneva departments	3 203	
Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia	360	
Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and Office of Internal Oversight Services (other duty stations)	369	

33. The Staff-Management Coordination Committee, as indicated in paragraph 11 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/63/282), is the Secretariat-wide joint mechanism established by the Secretary-General, in accordance with the Staff Regulations and Rules, to advise him on issues of staff welfare, conditions of work and other personnel policies. **The Advisory Committee is concerned about the ongoing stalemate between staff and management, which has a negative impact on their relations. It recalls article VIII of the Staff Regulations and section I, paragraph 1, of General Assembly resolution 61/244, and in this regard recommends that the Assembly request the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to resolve the situation expeditiously, a course of action that, in the Committee's view, requires the good-faith cooperation of all parties concerned.**

Conclusion

34. The Advisory Committee notes that the Secretary-General is not requesting the explicit approval of any specific proposal or initiative (see A/63/282, para. 189 (a)). **For its part, the Committee has made a number of specific comments, observations and recommendations on the report of the Secretary-General, including on the ability of the Secretariat to implement the full range of initiatives proposed (see, in particular, paras. 7 and 8 above). The Committee also points out that the Secretary-General, in his report on human resources management reform, does not set out the financial implications of the measures envisaged. In the Committee's view, it will be difficult for the General Assembly to form its views on the new measures proposed without information on their financial implications. The Committee is therefore of the opinion that even though the report is not a budget document, the Secretary-General should provide an indication to the Assembly of the financial and other administrative implications of the proposals put forward. In the view of the Committee, an appropriate time for this could be during the Assembly's deliberations on the agenda item entitled "Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations", which includes the budget outline. The Committee also recommends that, in future reports on human resources management, the Secretary-General respond more specifically to the provisions of resolution 61/244 and relevant subsequent resolutions.**

III. Streamlining contractual arrangements and harmonizing conditions of service

35. The report of the Secretary-General includes a summary of his proposals for the streamlining of contractual arrangements and the harmonization of conditions of service, including for United Nations field operations (A/63/298). For its consideration of this matter, the Advisory Committee also had before it the report of the Secretary-General setting out the amendments to the Staff Regulations that would be required if the General Assembly were to approve the Secretary-General's proposals (A/63/189). The proposals were originally submitted to the Assembly at its sixty-second session (see A/62/274), and the Advisory Committee had considered and made recommendations on most of them (see A/62/7/Add.14, sect. II). The Committee therefore confines its comments to those issues it regards as outstanding, namely, the procedures for granting and terminating continuing appointments; the eligibility of staff recruited through the national competitive examination for

consideration for continuing appointments; the establishment of a ceiling on the number of conversions to continuing appointments; and termination payments.

36. As indicated in paragraph 23 of the report of the Secretary-General, the cases of staff members eligible for consideration for a continuing appointment (i.e., those who have completed five years of continuous service in the Organization) would be reviewed by an advisory body, which would consider the need for the staff member's services in the Organization as a whole. In response to concerns expressed by the International Civil Service Commission, as well as by the Advisory Committee, that the Secretary-General's proposal on continuing appointments would be tantamount to automatic conversion, paragraph 24 of the report sets out procedures for the rigorous review of both the performance of staff and the continuing need for the related functions. **The Committee regrets that the Secretary-General has merely presented an outline of the procedures; further details, in particular regarding the modalities for determining whether there is a continuing need for an individual staff member's services, should be elaborated and presented to the General Assembly, together with information about the composition of the above-mentioned advisory body and its rules of procedure. Given the significant role played by the performance appraisal system in the proposed conversion procedure, the Committee is of the opinion that it is all the more important to take the measures necessary to strengthen that system (see paras. 23-27 above).**

37. In paragraphs 20 to 22 of his report, the Secretary-General reiterates his proposal that staff members recruited through the national competitive examination should be considered for continuing appointments after five years' service. The International Civil Service Commission considered that the staff members concerned should be considered after two years' service. **The Advisory Committee agrees with the Joint Inspection Unit and the Commission that the national competitive examination is a valuable tool providing a pool of young, talented recruits while at the same time contributing to compliance with geographical and gender mandates (see A/62/707 and A/61/30/Add.1) and, in this connection, draws attention to section III of General Assembly resolution 61/244, in which the Assembly noted with concern that a large number of candidates who had passed the examination remained on the roster for years. The Committee concurs with the Secretary-General that it is important to avoid creating different categories of staff with different thresholds for consideration for a continuing appointment. It therefore recommends that all staff, regardless of the mode of recruitment, be eligible for consideration for a continuing appointment after five years' continuous service on fixed-term appointments.** The Advisory Committee comments in more detail on the national competitive examination as a recruitment tool in paragraphs 60 and 61 below.

38. In its initial comments on the proposals, the Advisory Committee requested the Secretary-General to report on issues associated with the establishment of a ceiling on the number of annual conversions to continuing appointments in the context of his report to the Assembly at its sixty-third session (see A/62/7/Add.14, para. 13). In response to that request, the Secretary-General has reviewed those issues and, following consultations with staff representatives, has concluded that the introduction of a ceiling would not be in the interest of the Organization, nor would it be fair to staff. Upon enquiry, representatives of the Office of Human Resources Management informed the Committee that the Secretary-General had been unable to

identify an objective criterion to justify that measure. The Committee requested, but did not receive, information indicating how many current staff members will have reached the eligibility threshold for conversion to a continuing contract by 1 July 2009. **That information should be provided to the Assembly for its consideration of this question.**

39. **The Advisory Committee has consistently maintained that the Organization's staff selection system must be transparent and objective and ensure the equitable treatment of all staff. While reiterating its view that a prudent approach to conversions will be required, the Committee recommends against the establishment of a ceiling at the present stage. The Committee notes in this regard that conversion will, in any case, be an inherently phased process.**

40. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that, as at 1 July 2009, 746 staff members would be eligible for consideration for conversion to a permanent appointment pursuant to staff rule 104.12 (b) (iii). In order to protect the acquired rights of those individuals, the Secretary-General has proposed that, when the Staff Rules are amended to replace permanent appointments with continuing appointments, a one-time review be conducted of all fixed-term staff appointed under the 100 series of the Staff Rules who met the conditions set out in staff rule 104.12 (b) (iii) at the time the amended Staff Rules came into force. Upon enquiry, the Committee was also informed that, when acquired rights are at issue, consistent efforts have been made to ensure that any changes introducing less favourable conditions of service are applied only prospectively. **The Advisory Committee notes this assertion and requests that the relevant practices be reflected in future reports.**

41. As regards the procedures for the termination of continuing contracts, the Advisory Committee notes the effort made by the Secretary-General to respond to the request of the Committee contained in paragraph 23 of its previous report on human resources management (A/62/7/Add.14). **However, in the Committee's view, the proposed internal procedure for termination continues to lack clarity. In particular, although the phrase "in the interests of the good administration of the Organization" is already part of staff regulation 9.1 (see ST/SGB/2008/4), the Secretary-General's definition of the scope of this phrase, as set out in paragraph 29 of his report, is very general and its application may lead to legal challenges. Given that the proposed amendment to staff regulation 9.1 (see A/63/189, annex I) is derived from proposals on the streamlining of contractual arrangements and the harmonization of conditions of service, the Committee is of the view that it would be best to consider further all the potential ramifications of the proposed amendment.**

42. **On the issue of an end-of-service grant for staff holding fixed-term appointments, the Advisory Committee recommends deferring a decision until the International Civil Service Commission has concluded its deliberations on the matter.**

43. The Advisory Committee was provided, upon request, with updated estimated financial implications, as at 1 October 2008, for the designation of missions as family or non-family without the special operations approach, in line with the recommendation of the Committee contained in paragraph 35 of document A/62/7/Add.14. Those figures are set out in annex II to the present report.

44. In response to its request for further information on how the proposed streamlined contractual arrangements and harmonized conditions of service would affect staff in the Field Service category, the Advisory Committee was informed that, upon the introduction of harmonized conditions of service without the special operations approach, field staff at the lower levels of the Field Service category, particularly single staff members, could experience a loss of salaries and allowances when moving from the mission subsistence allowance regime model to the post adjustment model. Field Service staff without dependants could experience a loss of income in the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad, the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, the United Nations Mission in Liberia, the United Nations Mission in the Sudan and the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur ranging from $995 to $17,254. This is primarily because the post adjustment is paid as a percentage of net salary, whereas the mission subsistence allowance is paid at a flat rate. **The Committee is of the view that the impact of the Secretary-General's proposals on staff in the Field Service category should have been presented earlier, given that they account for a large portion of the international staff population. Furthermore, the Committee believes that harmonization needs to be implemented in a manner that does not reduce the overall compensation of staff already serving.**

IV. Implementation of the mobility policy

45. The report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the mobility policy (A/63/208) was submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 61/244, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to provide an analysis of the managed mobility programme, including information on financial implications, and also addressed mobility issues raised by the Advisory Committee in its previous report (see A/62/7/Add.14, sect. III, paras. 37-42). The report of the Secretary-General provides background information on the genesis of the mobility policy, which was conceived as a way of helping the Organization to increase its flexibility and responsiveness, improve programme delivery capacity, offer increased staff development and career advancement opportunities and develop a more comprehensive understanding of and ability to address the many facets of the Organization's work programme through greater integration (see A/63/208, para. 6). The policy was introduced and progressively refined in response to a series of Assembly resolutions (including 49/222, 51/226, 53/221 and 55/258) and ultimately integrated into a new staff selection system, which took effect on 1 May 2002 (see ST/SGB/2002/5, ST/AI/2002/4, ST/AI/2005/8, ST/AI/2006/3 and ST/AI/2007/2).

46. In his report, the Secretary-General noted the difficulties experienced in the initial implementation of the managed reassignment programmes. **Under the circumstances, the Advisory Committee supports the Secretary-General's intention to suspend the programmes in their current form after the final exercise is concluded for staff at the D-1 and D-2 levels and to undertake a comprehensive review of the mobility policy, in consultation with Member States and other stakeholders (see A/63/208, para. 68). The Committee also concurs with the Secretary-General that the recommendations of the Task Force on Human Resources Management, listed in paragraph 69 of the report,**

should be taken into account during the review. The Committee notes, however, that the issue of career development for local staff (ibid., para. 69 (a) (vi)) is an ongoing management function that should not be addressed in the context of mobility, and considers that the possible inclusion of a "mobility requirement" in new offers of appointment (ibid., para. 69 (c)) requires further discussion in the context of the review of the mobility policy. The Committee further requests the Secretary-General, within the framework of the review, to respond fully to the requests of the Assembly contained in resolution 61/244 and other relevant resolutions.

47. **The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly take note of the report of the Secretary-General, taking into account the foregoing comments and observations of the Committee.**

V. Recruitment and staffing

48. The report of the Secretary-General (A/63/285) contains information on progress made in advancing the reform proposals on recruitment and staffing set out in previous reports of the Secretary-General (A/61/255 and A/61/822) and responds to the outstanding requests of the Advisory Committee that the Secretary-General report at the sixty-third session on progress made in the replacement of the e-staffing tool, the implementation of pre-screened rosters and the strategic workforce planning process (see A/62/7/Add.14, paras. 56 and 57).

49. As the Secretary-General indicated in paragraph 4 of his report, the introduction of a talent management framework would be a crucial step in speeding up recruitment and ensuring that the United Nations is better equipped to meet current and future staffing needs, while increasing the opportunities for the career development of staff. The proposed talent management framework would be implemented by means of an e-staffing support tool which, as indicated in paragraph 28 above, is intended to replace Galaxy.

50. The first element of the framework described in the report of the Secretary-General is strategic workforce planning, which comprises supply/demand and gap analyses and seeks to establish a multi-year forecast of staff resources needed to support current and new mandates in the short and medium terms. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the costs associated with those analyses for 2009 would be absorbed and that the need for any additional requirements would be addressed in the proposed programme budget for 2010-2011. **In this context, the Committee notes the efforts undertaken by the Secretary-General to achieve the gender balance and geographical distribution targets set by the General Assembly, but stresses that much remains to be done.**

51. The second element of the proposed talent management framework is staffing through recruitment, targeted outreach and roster management. In its resolution 61/244, the General Assembly recognized that pre-screened rosters could considerably expedite the recruitment process in the United Nations. The roster-based staffing process proposed by the Secretary-General comprises the following stages. First, generic vacancy announcements would be used to advertise openings identified through workforce planning. After applying for a generic vacancy, candidates would be screened for eligibility and basic suitability by human resources officers supported by the information technology tool. Panels of experts in

the relevant occupational group would then, by means of competency-based interviews and other assessment methods, review candidates' suitability for the types of occupations and levels in which they have expressed interest. Before placement on the roster, central review bodies would review the process leading to placement. Finally, the names of rostered candidates would be made available to programme managers, who would then make their selection decisions.

52. The Secretary-General envisages that rosters would be actively managed to ensure that candidates are available and interested in specific vacancies and that there is a sufficient number of candidates for selection for current and anticipated vacancies. Candidates would normally remain on the roster for three years, with the possibility of extension for a further two years if they confirmed their interest and availability. It is envisaged that, to ensure the viability of the roster system, it would be necessary to maintain a ratio of up to five candidates on the roster to each vacancy available.

53. **The Advisory Committee notes the emphasis on outreach and urges the Secretary-General to ensure that outreach activities focus on positions both at Headquarters and in the field.**

54. **The Advisory Committee has in the past expressed its support for rosters as a potentially important tool for the staff selection process (see A/60/7, para. 65). It stresses, however, that the preparation and maintenance of rosters could involve considerable human and financial resources. The Committee also cautions that experience has shown that rosters are not a panacea for the difficulties affecting the recruitment and staffing system.** For instance, in its review on the use of the national competitive examination as a recruitment tool (A/62/707), the Joint Inspection Unit pointed out that 30 per cent of candidates on the roster as at 31 December 2006 had been waiting for more than three years. The Board of Auditors, for its part, noted that whereas the proportion of successful national competitive examination candidates from underrepresented and overrepresented countries was, respectively, 34 per cent and zero, the proportion of people actually recruited from unrepresented or underrepresented countries was only 16 per cent, and 25 per cent of the people recruited from the roster came from countries that became overrepresented in the period between the organization of the exam and the moment of their recruitment (A/63/5 (Vol. I), chap. II, para. 252). Moreover, it is clear from the additional information provided to the Committee that there are other significant bottlenecks in the recruitment and staffing process, including the time taken to build vacancy announcements and the time taken by programme managers to assess candidates.

55. **The Advisory Committee welcomes the reduction in the average time taken to fill vacancies (162 days in 2007, as compared to 174 days previously) and trusts that once all the elements of the talent management framework are in place, the target of 100 days set by the Secretary-General in paragraph 4 of the report will be reached.**

56. Although the Secretary-General asserted that the ultimate aim of the new talent management system was to reduce the time taken to fill vacancies, other issues should be considered, in particular those relating to the transparency of the recruitment process. In this connection, the Advisory Committee notes the proposed change to the role of the central review bodies in the roster-based staffing process, namely, that under the new proposals, those bodies would no longer review the

evaluation criteria for each individual vacancy, but rather would review the process leading to the placement of candidates on the roster. **The Committee recommends that the Secretary-General further clarify the envisaged role of the central review bodies. In the Committee's view, the report would have benefited from the inclusion of more detailed information about the composition and functioning of the panels of experts in particular occupational groups, which would determine the suitability of both internal and external candidates for the types of occupations and levels for which they have expressed interest.**

57. The Advisory Committee requested but did not receive information on the number of consultants and individuals initially hired under general temporary assistance who were subsequently recruited as United Nations staff. **That information should be provided to the General Assembly for its consideration of recruitment and staffing issues.**

58. The Secretary-General indicated in paragraph 20 of his report that generic vacancy announcements would be advertised for 60 days. He proposed, however, that the General Assembly reduce the current period for advertising individual vacancies from 60 days to 30, since experience has shown that most candidates apply well before the deadline. **The Advisory Committee is not convinced that, at the present stage, the Secretary-General's proposal will contribute significantly to expediting the recruitment process. It also shares the concerns expressed by Member States that reducing the period of advertising vacancies from 60 days to a shorter period would be a disadvantage to potential candidates from some States having limited access to the United Nations website due to technology gaps. Accordingly, at this time, it recommends against reducing the period for advertising individual vacancies from 60 to 30 days.**

59. In paragraph 37 of the report of the Secretary-General, the General Assembly is requested to approve the establishment of a roster-based approach to the selection of staff for an initial period of one year. **The Advisory Committee is of the opinion that the roster-based approach proposed by the Secretary-General has not been sufficiently elaborated. The Secretary-General should present more detailed proposals to the Assembly, prepared on the basis of an in-depth evaluation of the current roster system, for Headquarters and the field.**

60. Although the report of the Secretary-General does not contain any specific proposals on the national competitive examination, the Advisory Committee wishes to take this opportunity to comment on its value as a recruitment tool. In its report entitled "Review of the national competitive recruitment examination as a recruitment tool" (A/62/707), the Joint Inspection Unit concluded that, in general, the examination serves well the objectives set by the General Assembly. It provides the Organization with highly qualified Professional staff at the entry level and is a useful, objective and competitive tool for identifying applicants who have excellent professional knowledge and skills suitable for positions in the United Nations. The overall satisfaction rate of programme managers with the performance of staff recruited through the national competitive examination is high (ibid., executive summary). However, the Joint Inspection Unit also highlights a number of flaws in the process as currently administered, including the excessively long duration of the cycle, poor roster management and the fact that the planning process for the examination is unreliable and not part of the Organization's overall strategic labour-force planning. The Ombudsman has pointed out that many candidates recruited

through the examination have reported difficulties in moving from the P-2 to the P-3 level (see A/63/283).

61. **The Advisory Committee agrees with the assessment of the Joint Inspection Unit and draws attention to the comments of the Ombudsman. It also points to the comments and recommendations of the Board of Auditors (see A/63/5 (Vol. I), chap. II, paras. 255-258). The Committee recommends that the shortcomings identified by the Board of Auditors, the Joint Inspection Unit and the Ombudsman be addressed. The Committee further urges the Secretary-General to take measures to accelerate the recruitment of candidates who have passed the national competitive examination (see resolution 61/244, sect. III, para. 1).**

62. **The Advisory Committee takes the view that consideration should be given to broadening the scope of the national competitive examination to cover more posts than those subject to geographical distribution.** Indeed, as indicated in paragraph 17 of the Secretary-General's comments on the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (A/62/707/Add.1), the Office of Human Resources Management has already widened the possibility of recruiting national competitive examination candidates for extrabudgetary and peacekeeping support account posts and intends to consider further steps in this respect in line with the current mandates of the General Assembly. **Accordingly, the Advisory Committee recommends that the Assembly consider requesting, for consideration at its sixty-fifth session, a feasibility study, building on reports of oversight bodies, to determine whether broadening the scope of the national competitive examination would serve to further strengthen the Organization's capacity for programme delivery.**

VI. Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse

63. The report of the Secretary-General on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (A/62/890) was submitted in compliance with General Assembly resolution 57/306, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to maintain data on investigations into sexual exploitation and related offences. The report presents data on allegations in the United Nations system for 2007. It also describes progress made in the enforcement of related United Nations standards of conduct.

64. The Advisory Committee notes that, as indicated in section III of the report, the total number of allegations has declined substantially, with only 159 cases reported in 2007 as compared with 371 in 2006. Although there was an increase in the number of allegations relating to personnel from United Nations entities other than the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (31, as opposed to 14 in 2006), the majority of allegations, or 127 of the total, involved peacekeeping personnel. The Committee notes that that figure represents a 64 per cent decrease as compared with the preceding period and can be partly attributed to preventive measures, such as increasing training and awareness-raising activities. It should be pointed out, however, that reports from other organizations suggest chronic underreporting of allegations against United Nations personnel, as well as against personnel from the international aid community.

65. The Advisory Committee notes the strengthening of measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (see A/62/890, sect. IV). **The Committee recommends that the General Assembly take note of the report of the Secretary-General.**

VII. Practice of the Secretary-General in disciplinary matters and possible criminal behaviour

66. The report on the practice of the Secretary-General in disciplinary matters and possible criminal behaviour, which covers the period from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008 (A/63/202), was submitted in response to General Assembly resolution 59/287, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to provide information on an annual basis on all actions taken in cases of proven misconduct and/or criminal behaviour and the disciplinary action and, where appropriate, legal action taken in accordance with established procedures and regulations. The report provides a broad overview of the administrative machinery in disciplinary matters, a summary of the cases in respect of which the Secretary-General imposed a disciplinary measure during the reporting period and information on the practice of the Secretary-General in cases of possible criminal behaviour.

67. The Advisory Committee has commented in more detail on disciplinary issues in its report on investigations (A/63/492). In addition, issues relating to the delegation of authority for disciplinary matters to the field will be dealt with by the Committee in its forthcoming report on the administration of justice.

VIII. Gratis personnel provided by Governments and other entities

68. The report of the Secretary-General on gratis personnel provided by Governments and other entities (A/63/310/Add.1) was submitted in response to requests contained in General Assembly resolutions 51/243 and 57/281 B and covers 2006 and 2007.

69. The Advisory Committee notes that the total number of type I gratis personnel (associate experts, technical cooperation experts and interns) engaged in 2007 increased by 10 per cent as compared with 2006 (from 1,767 to 1,952), owing primarily to a 10 per cent increase in the number of interns. The geographical representation of type I gratis personnel showed a positive trend, and the representation of women remained high.

70. As for type II gratis personnel, who can be accepted on an exceptional basis to provide expertise not available within the Organization and for very specialized functions or to provide temporary and urgent assistance in the case of new and/or expanded mandates, the Advisory Committee notes that, as compared with the preceding biennium, the use of such personnel by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs decreased by nearly half (from 85 in 2004 to 45 in 2007). However, owing to a rise in the number of small and mid-size emergencies, flash appeals and activities related to the coordination of emergency relief managed by the Office, the number of individuals engaged by the latter more than doubled during the reporting period (from 23 in 2006 to 54 in 2007). During the same

period, the average length of service of individuals recruited as type II gratis personnel decreased from 4.3 to 3.9 months per year.

71. The annex to the Secretary-General's report contains eight separate tables providing data, separately and by year, on nationality, gender, departmental assignment and functions performed by each type of gratis personnel. **In this connection, the Advisory Committee recalls that, with reference to the previous report of the Secretary-General on gratis personnel provided by Governments and other entities (A/61/257/Add.1), it had noted that this presentation made it difficult to compare trends for each year of the biennium. Accordingly, the Committee reiterates its request that the format of the tables be streamlined so as to consolidate the information for the two years of the biennium into a single table (see A/61/537, para. 81).**

72. **The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly take note of the report of the Secretary-General, taking into account the foregoing comments and observations of the Committee.**

IX. Employment of retirees and retired former staff and extension of staff beyond the mandatory age of separation

73. The report of the Secretary-General on the employment of retirees and retired former staff and the extension of staff beyond the mandatory age of separation (A/63/310/Add.2) was submitted pursuant to General Assembly decision 51/408 and subsequent resolutions of the Assembly (including 57/305, 59/266 and 61/244), and provides information concerning the employment of retired staff in the Secretariat during the biennium 2006-2007.

74. The Advisory Committee notes from the report that during the reporting period, a total of 979 individual retirees were employed, representing an increase of 99.4 per cent over the biennium 2004-2005. The total expenditure rose by 49.1 per cent, from $33.5 million to $50 million, although the average per day cost of a retiree decreased by 17.9 per cent. That situation is due mainly to the engagement of a larger number of retirees in the General Service and related categories. As indicated in paragraph 29 of the report, during the biennium 2006-2007 46 retirees served in decision-making positions in 20 departments and offices. In paragraph 34, it is reported that during the same period, 272 staff members were retained beyond the mandatory age of separation, representing an increase of 22.5 per cent over the preceding biennium. The language and related services remained the largest users of retirees in terms of both the number of days worked and the expenditure incurred by the Organization. That situation is due primarily to the high retirement rate, exacerbated by uneven results in the replenishment of language examination rosters and growing global competition from other employers. Field operations have also used retirees to meet their expanding and evolving needs.

75. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that former staff receiving a pension benefit from the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund were subject to restrictions on their earnings (see ST/AI/2003/8 and Amend.1). Language service staff may not earn more than the monetary equivalent of 125 days for work performed and/or services provided during a calendar year (see A/63/509, annex). All other former staff may not earn more than $22,000 for work performed and/or

services provided during a calendar year. Their cumulative period of service must not exceed six months per calendar year. Retirees who exceed those limits cease to receive pension benefits and must resume their contributions to the Pension Fund.

76. **The Advisory Committee is of the opinion that the annual report of the Secretary-General on the employment of retirees contributes to enhancing the transparency of human resources management practices. However, the sizeable amount of data contained in the report requires further analysis. In future, the Secretary-General should focus on identifying the possible reasons for patterns and trends that emerge from the data presented, together with an indication of whether such trends are positive or negative and possible approaches to remedying negative developments.**

77. The Advisory Committee recognizes that in certain departments, in particular the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, the use of retirees has notable advantages, not least because language staff having retired from the Organization have a solid knowledge of United Nations terminology, thereby allowing them to work with minimal supervision. **The Committee is concerned, however, that this trend is becoming more widespread in other departments and offices of the United Nations.** Indeed, upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that staff members were often extended beyond the mandatory age of separation pending recruitment of a replacement. **The Committee is of the view that this situation can and should be avoided through rigorous succession planning and the issuance of vacancy announcements six months before the anticipated retirement. The Committee also points out that the employment of retirees in decision-making positions has been strongly discouraged by the General Assembly and, as such, should be contemplated only in exceptional circumstances.**

78. In this general context, the Secretary-General and the International Civil Service Commission may wish to explore the possibility of changing the mandatory age of separation, taking into account such issues as the rejuvenation of the Secretariat, vacancy rates and the actuarial implications of that course of action for the Pension Fund.

79. **The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly take note of the report of the Secretary-General, taking into account the foregoing comments and observations of the Committee.**

X. Consultants and individual contractors

80. The report of the Secretary-General on consultants and individual contractors (A/63/310/Add.3) was submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 61/244, 59/266 and 57/305, in which the Secretary-General was requested to report biennially on the use of consultants and individual contractors and the factors contributing to their use.

81. The Secretary-General indicated in paragraph 8 of the report that the total number of consultants and individual contractors hired during the reporting period increased by 88.7 per cent and 166.6 per cent, respectively, as compared with the preceding biennium, although that increase is attributable partly to the expanded scope of the data included in the report and the new methodology adopted. The

Advisory Committee notes that for the same period, the total combined expenditure on consultants and individual contractors totalled $131.5 million, an increase of $59.1 million (138.9 per cent) and $19.8 million (197.2 per cent) respectively. While the average cost of a consultancy contract increased, the average cost of hiring an individual contractor decreased. The average daily cost of both consultants and individual contractors decreased as compared to the previous biennium. During the reporting period, the percentage of women consultants steadily increased and, in the case of individual contractors, gender parity was reached.

82. According to the report, the majority of consultants were engaged for programme implementation and advisory services, while individual contractors were, for the most part, used for the preparation of meetings, lectures and training courses, as well as for advisory services. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Economic Commission for Africa, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the United Nations Environment Programme were the primary employers of consultants and individual contractors. As indicated in paragraph 32 of the report, the results of a survey conducted by the Office of Human Resources Management revealed that about one third of departments and offices used some kind of roster of consultants. It is envisaged that a global roster of consultants could be incorporated into the new enterprise resource planning system.

83. **The Advisory Committee regrets that the Secretary-General has not reported on factors contributing to the use of consultants and individual contractors, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 57/305. Accordingly, the Committee reiterates its previous request that the raw data contained in the report be supplemented by an analysis of those factors (see A/61/537, para. 88). Future reports should also contain definitions of the terms "consultant", "individual contractor" and "institutional contractor" used by the Secretary-General.**

84. The Advisory Committee notes the increase in the number of consultants and individual contractors. From additional information provided upon request, the Committee concludes that in many instances consultants have been hired for long periods of time (in excess of 24 months) and that many were engaged in core activities that could have been carried out by staff. **The Committee stresses that the use of consultants should be governed by the relevant General Assembly resolutions (see, in particular, resolution 53/221, sect. VIII). Although the Committee understands that in some instances the necessary skills and expertise for a particular project cannot be found within the Secretariat, it is nevertheless of the view that greater use should be made of in-house capacity in some areas for which consultants are routinely hired.**

85. The Advisory Committee notes that the report provides very little information about institutional contractors and the circumstances in which they are used. **In this connection, the Committee reiterates its previous request that, in future reports, the Secretary-General provide detailed information on institutional contractors, including institution, duration and expenditure (see A/61/537, para. 89).**

86. The Advisory Committee recalls that the General Assembly has repeatedly expressed concern about the management of the recruitment process for consultants and individual contractors. In this connection, the Board of Auditors has identified

significant shortcomings in the selection procedures used by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Indeed, according to the Board, there is at no stage in the procedure any check to guarantee the transparency of choices made (A/63/5 (Vol. I), chap. II, para. 307). The Committee has commented on this issue (see A/63/474). The Committee also draws attention to the other comments and recommendations of the Board of Auditors (see A/63/5 (Vol. I), chap. II, paras. 295-309). **The Committee recommends that the Secretary-General be requested to adhere to existing guidelines on the selection and recruitment of consultants and individual contractors Secretariat-wide. In this context, the Committee also stresses the need for the Secretary-General to make every effort to select consultants from the widest possible geographical base.**

87. **The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly take note of the report of the Secretary-General, taking into account the foregoing comments and observations of the Committee.**

XI. Measures to improve the balance in the geographical distribution of staff in the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

88. The report of the Secretary-General on measures to improve the balance in the geographical distribution of staff in the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (A/63/204) provides information on the measures taken by the Office in response to the request contained in General Assembly resolution 62/236. As the Secretary-General indicated in section II of the report, the measures currently being implemented include the holding of another round of national competitive examinations in human rights; the widest possible circulation of vacancy announcements; and, as approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 61/159, the application of a temporary mechanism whereby the recruitment of staff at the P-3 level is not restricted to successful national competitive examination candidates. According to the Secretary-General, those measures had resulted in a substantial improvement in the overall geographic diversity of the Office over the previous 18 months (ibid., para. 8).

89. The Advisory Committee notes the steps taken by the Office of the High Commissioner. **It believes, however, that further progress is required in order that it may respond fully to the request of the General Assembly contained in paragraph 98 of its resolution 62/236. Given the nature of the work done by the Office, the Committee is of the view that it is essential for the Office to have broad geographical representation among its staff. The Committee suggests that, in order to further the objectives of the Assembly, the Secretary-General may wish to report on how progress in the area of geographical representation is measured and achieved, including through the use of the senior managers' compacts, human resources action plans and outreach activities.**

90. The Advisory Committee points out that the policies governing staff selection and geographical distribution apply to the Secretariat as a whole. It further points out that the system of geographic ranges relates to individual countries (see, inter alia, General Assembly resolution 61/244, sect. X, para. 10). In this connection, the Committee notes that the table in paragraph 8 of the report of the Secretary-General illustrates staff representation in the Office by regional group. **The Committee**

therefore recommends that the Assembly request the Secretary-General to include in future reports statistical information on geographical distribution by country.

91. **The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly take note of the report of the Secretary-General, taking into account the foregoing comments and observations of the Committee.**

XII. Activities of the Ethics Office

92. The report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Ethics Office (A/63/301) was submitted pursuant to paragraph 16 (i) of General Assembly resolution 60/254. The report covers the period from 1 August 2007 to 31 July 2008.

93. In paragraph 5 of the report, it is recalled that the objective of the Ethics Office, as set out in Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/2005/22, is to assist in ensuring that all staff members observe and perform their functions consistent with the highest standards of integrity, as envisaged in the Charter of the United Nations.

94. The Advisory Committee notes the Secretary-General's efforts to consolidate a culture of ethics and integrity at the United Nations Secretariat. However, the report does not include a clear description of the Office's workplan or an assessment of the impact of its activities. Furthermore, the information on the financial disclosure programme set out in paragraphs 35 to 46 of the report is unclear and lacks analysis. **Accordingly, the Committee recommends that in future reports on the activities of the Ethics Office, the Secretary-General provide clear and precise data, by duty station, on the number of individuals covered by the programme, the number of individuals who have complied with their filing obligations, the number of individuals who have failed to comply with those obligations and the reasons for their failure to comply.**

95. The Advisory Committee recognizes the role of the Ethics Office in the provision of advice to staff members. Indeed, as indicated in paragraph 7 of the report, 77 per cent of the total request volume during the reporting period corresponded to requests for advice. In paragraph 53 of his report, however, the Secretary-General indicates that "the seemingly overlapping mandates" of the Ethics Office, the Office of the Ombudsman, the Administrative Law Unit of the Office of Human Resources Management, the Office of Internal Oversight Services and other relevant offices "has led to confusion among staff members in terms of finding the appropriate mechanism or office to address their grievances". **The Committee stresses that staff should be provided with appropriate information on the role of each of the aforementioned entities and their interrelationship. It recommends that, in the next report on this question, the Secretary-General further clarify the issues raised in paragraph 53 of the current report.**

96. **In the view of the Advisory Committee, much of the added value of the Ethics Office resides in its ability to compile, publicize and ensure the common application of existing rules and regulations on ethics-related issues and to develop new standards as and when appropriate. It also has an important role to play in the design of training programmes and awareness-raising materials on ethics-related matters. The Committee encourages the Ethics Office and the Office of Human Resources Management to continue to work together on**

mainstreaming ethics training into the curriculum of regular training offered at the Secretariat. Care should be taken, however, to ensure that the Ethics Office does not duplicate the work of other departments and entities and, in particular, that ethics training modules are incorporated into existing training activities in substantive areas to the extent possible.

97. **With regard to the request of the Secretary-General contained in paragraph 85 of his report, the Advisory Committee remains of the view that it is within the purview of the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chairman of CEB, to bring issues relating to system-wide coordination to the attention of its members. Accordingly, the Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to discuss with the executive heads of the specialized agencies and the United Nations funds and programmes, within the framework of CEB, areas of possible cooperation on ethics-related matters.**

98. **The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly take note of the report of the Secretary-General, taking into account the foregoing comments and observations of the Committee.**

Annex I

Documentation reviewed and used as background by the Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the following reports of the Secretary-General on human resources management:

(a) Human resources management reform (A/63/282);

(b) Measures taken to address seven systemic human resources issues raised in the context of the reform of the internal system of administration of justice (A/63/132);

(c) Detailed proposals for streamlining United Nations contractual arrangements: a way forward (A/63/298);

(d) Amendments to the Staff Regulations (A/63/189);

(e) Implementation of the mobility policy (A/63/208);

(f) Recruitment and staffing in the United Nations: strategy going forward (A/63/285);

(g) Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (A/62/890);

(h) Practice of the Secretary-General in disciplinary matters and possible criminal behaviour, 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008 (A/63/202);

(i) Gratis personnel provided by Governments and other entities (A/63/310/Add.1);

(j) Employment of retirees and retired former staff, and extension of staff beyond the mandatory age of separation (A/63/310/Add.2);

(k) Consultants and individual contractors (A/63/310/Add.3);

(l) Measures to improve the balance in the geographical distribution of the staff in the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (A/63/204);

(m) Activities of the Ethics Office (A/63/301).

The Committee also had before it the report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat (A/63/310); the notes of the Secretary-General transmitting the reports of the Joint Inspection Unit on the review of the national competitive recruitment examination as a recruitment tool (A/62/707), United Nations system staff medical coverage (A/62/541) and the age structure of human resources in the organizations of the United Nations system (A/62/628), as well as the note of the Secretary-General continuing his comments thereon (A/62/707/Add.1, A/62/541/Add.1 and A/62/628/Add.1); the report of the International Civil Service Commission for 2008 (A/63/30); and the note by the Secretary-General containing the views of the staff representatives of the United Nations Secretariat (A/C.5/63/3 and Add.1 and 2). The Committee also took into account the observations and recommendations contained in the reports of the Board of Auditors, in particular its observations and recommendations on human resources management (A/63/5 (Vol. I), chap. II, paras. 240-294).

Annex II

Estimated annual financial implications for the designation of missions as family or non-family based on the designation of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, without the special operations approach[a] as at 1 October 2008

Mission	Location	Security phase	Proposed status	Number of staff			Entitlements		Reappointment from 300 to 100 series	Rest and recuperation travel	Total
				Professional	Field Service	Total	Family duty station	Non-family duty station			
							(in United States dollars)				
Peacekeeping operations											
United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad[b]	N'Djamena	IV	Non-family	187	323	510		(2 558 609)	1 899 646	2 652 000	1 993 037
United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara	Laayoune	I	Family	24	75	99	3 949 596	—	186 998	249 600	4 386 194
United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti	Port-au-Prince	III	Non-family	199	283	482		1 485 949	1 675 686	1 911 000	5 072 635
United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo	Kinshasa	III	Non-family	357	580	937		2 016 831	3 068 451	3 580 200	8 665 482
African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur[b]	El-Fasher	III	Non-family	557	680	1 237		12 940 664	4 566 194	6 432 400	23 939 258
United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo[c]	Pristina	III	Non-family	164	137	301		5 999 033	1 237 139	1 173 900	8 410 072
United Nations Mission in Liberia	Monrovia	III	Non-family	218	271	489		5 859 558	1 636 806	1 891 500	9 387 864
United Nations Mission in the Sudan	Khartoum	I	Non-family	310	478	788		7 954 265	3 334 327	3 309 600	14 598 192
United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste	Dili	II	Family	143	189	332	9 555 416	—	1 294 553	839 800	11 689 769
United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire	Abidjan	III	Non-family	159	243	402		6 716 291	1 353 832	1 552 200	9 622 323
United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia	Tbilisi	I	Non-family	27	66	93		2 338 648	246 277	179 400	2 764 325
Subtotal				**2 345**	**3 325**	**5 670**	**13 505 012**	**42 752 632**	**20 499 909**	**23 771 600**	**100 529 153**

Mission	Location	Security phase	Proposed status	Number of staff: Professional	Number of staff: Field Service	Number of staff: Total	Entitlements: Family duty station	Entitlements: Non-family duty station	Entitlements: Reappointment from Abuja to 200 series	Entitlements: Rest and recuperation travel	Total
							(in United States dollars)				
Special political missions											
United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi	Bujumbura	III	Non-family	53	65	118		1 920 041	419 960	503 100	2 843 101
United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in the Central African Republic	Bangui	II	Family	11	13	24	1 064 977	—	71 529	52 650	1 189 156
Lord's Resistance Army	Kampala	I	Family	6	2	8	123 225	—	—	—	123 225
United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan	Kabul	III	Non-family	124	106	230		4 346 506	938 773	1 196 000	6 481 279
United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq	Baghdad	IV	Non-family	108	178	286		3 984 403	1 043 322	834 600	5 862 325
United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone	Freetown	II	Non-family	30	16	46		1 182 862	314 211	179 400	1 676 473
United Nations Mission in Nepal[a]	Kathmandu	I	Family	115	85	200	8 705 464	—	795 715	—	9 501 179
United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in Guinea-Bissau	Bissau	II	Family	7	5	12	673 291	—	44 952	36 400	754 643
United Nations Political Office for Somalia	Nairobi	I	Family	11	7	18	411 347	—	57 202	—	468 549
United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia	Ashgabat	No phase	Family	5	2	7	286 061	—	17 363	13 650	317 074
Subtotal				470	479	949	11 264 365	11 433 810	3 703 027	2 815 800	29 217 003
Total				2 815	3 804	6 619	24 769 377	54 186 442	24 202 936	26 587 400	129 746 155

[a] As recommended by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in document A/62/7/Add.14.

[b] Based on planned deployment by 30 June 2009.

[c] May be adjusted in the light of future reconfiguration of the mission.